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First Press

First Presbyterian Church

September 2020

Rally Day at FPC!



On Sunday, September 27, 2020, our congregation will be celebrating “Rally Day” during our virtual Sunday worship service. Growing up in Baptist churches, I did not hear of “Rally Day” until I became a pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). I had to ask one of my elders what “Rally Day” was!

Historically, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) congregations around the country held “Rally Day on the Sunday after Labor Day to kick-off the beginning of the Christian education programming. After a summer of people being away on vacations and out of their typical routine; “Rally Day”

welcomed people “home” to church.

In many PC(USA) congregations (including FPC Dubuque), the activities on “Rally Day” include gifting third-graders with Bibles from the church, commissioning faith formation leaders and teachers for the year, and other rituals like potlucks, outdoor games, and backpack blessings. Each activity purposefully is chosen and designed to highlight the importance of Christian formation and education. As one of the PC (USA)’s core values, and a fulfilment of the promises we make at a child’s baptism to nurture them in the Christian faith, faith formation is an essential part of our church mission.

This year, as with many other annual church practices, “Rally Day” will look different. We are getting creative about ensuring we can distribute Bibles to our third-graders and commission our faith formation teachers, but there will be no after worship social time or delicious food to share together. Our faith formation opportunities will look different this year - utilizing a mixture of virtual and socially-distanced platforms - but, the core value of passing on our faith to the next generation remains strong.

I am thankful for the creative and persevering spirits of our Christian Education Committee who has been hard at work over the last several weeks figuring out how to safely and effectively provide these faith formation opportunities.

During this time of physical distance from the church building and our “regular” ways of doing things, I challenge you each to consider what steps you can take in ownership of the faith formation of the members



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Christian Education

Rally Day at FPC! cont'd

of your household as well as in our congregation. Faith formation is most certainly not limited to a church Sunday School classroom -- it takes place over a lifetime and in many contexts!

How has God uniquely gifted you to share your faith with others?

- Share your highs and lows with each other and how God has walked with you during those times.
- Send a card to a child or teen in the church sharing your favorite Bible verse and why.
- Read a Bible story or watch one on YouTube, then talk about what you learned.
- Pray together. Look up the "Five Finger Prayer," recite the Lord's Prayer, or read a Psalm if you aren't sure where to start.
- Teach a skill you are good at to a child or teen in the church (socially-distanced, of course) and share how God gives everyone gifts to help others.
- Choose a "random act of kindness" to do, then discuss why God calls us to be kind to our neighbor.
- Go for a walk in nature and list all the things you see God made. Be quiet, and listen for the Holy Spirit's wisdom.
- Print a coloring sheet off the internet with a Bible verse or inspirational saying and send it to another church member, with a blank one included for them to do and send on to another person.

Okay, I think you get the idea! The point is, faith formation is a lifestyle we cultivate inside AND outside of a "classroom." *"Rally Day" is everyday!*

Let me know what you try out and how it goes! I'd love to hear how we are growing the seeds of faith in our community.

In Christ,
Pastor Stephanie



Bibles for Our Third Graders

Each September, the Christian Education committee, on behalf of the congregation, presents a Bible to each of our third graders. This gift is given in response to our baptismal vow to help God's precious children know about God's love for them through the reading of His Holy Word.

Because of the pandemic, we will present the Bibles to each child at their home and videotape the presentation to share as part of the Rally Day service. Any family of a third grade youth interested should contact Pastor Stephanie for more details.

Bible
PresentAtion

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path." Psalm 119:105



Christian Education

Sacraments Class

Calling all 3rd-6th graders!!!

You and a parent are invited to join Pastor Stephanie to learn about Baptism and the Lord's Supper in a fun and creative way. Mark your calendars for 3 Sunday afternoons: Oct. 4, 11, and 18 from 3:00-4:30 p.m. We hope to meet at church, wearing masks and observing socially distancing. Please let Pastor Stephanie know if you would like to join in the excitement.



Confirmation Class



This Fall Pastor Stephanie invites interested youth (grades 8-10) to participate in a Confirmation Class at FPC. Through this yearlong faith exploration, youth delve into what it means to be a Christian. Adult mentors walk beside each Confirmand, meeting with them regularly and sharing their faith. Confirmation is celebrated in the spring for those who successfully complete the program and desire to profess their faith and join the church as active members. Interested youth should contact Pastor Stephanie for more details.

Mission Mailbag

Giving to mission throughout God's world can bring astounding results. Read this and give thanks for how God is at work in our midst:

From Theresa Caldwell of the Dubuque Food Pantry:

Dear First Pres Church,

Thank you for your donation to the Food Pantry. You really will help a lot of families with this needed 33lbs. of food. Thank you for sharing with those in need.

It is through the concern of people like you that the Food Pantry is able to respond to emergency needs in our community. Each month we help between 275-350 households in the Dubuque area. Thank you for making it possible to continue this ministry of serving the less fortunate in our area.

God bless you and your generosity.

*Sincerely,
Theresa Caldwell, manager*



From Bill McConnell of Presbyterian Mission

Dear Partners in God's Mission:

2020 has been a most unusual year. Many of us are trying to come to terms with our "new normal" - whatever that is. Yet, as Presbyterians, we preserve thought this global pandemic, not because of what we do, but because of what we believe. Together. By God's grace and mercy, we will get through this. And so, we give thanks for churches like yours. Thank you for your prayers, perseverance, and support.

On behalf of the Presbyterian Mission Agency, please allow me to express our appreciation to you. For your generous and faithful support of our mission personnel. You are a valued partner in mission. As always, please let me know how I can support you in your mission efforts.

Your in Christ,
Bill McConnell, Mission Engagement Advisor

Mission

Update from FPC's Favorite "F" Friends, L & C

On August 23rd, 2020, a committee was able to connect with our close friends in Thailand. They sent their greetings to the congregation via a recorded message. If you have not yet viewed this, we highly encourage you to do so utilizing the recording from 8.30.2020 on our webpage through 9.8.2020. Please honor the privacy of our friends by not using the images or content of this message in any other context.

During our conversation with them, they shared how we can be praying for them:

- Two of their adult children live in the area of California affected by fires, prayers for safety
- L & C as they develop relationships with their neighbors and learn to speak into their context
- COVID-19 has not been a significant problem where they are living, but government has kept strict isolation policies, which have loosened a bit now and is providing L & C the ability to connect with others more easily
- For L & C's friendship with two young women in the area who want to join L & C in their goals for the area
- For the international gathering of seekers where many come to study and have a hunger for learning, pray this will be a fruitful endeavor for L & C
- C is taking a break from teaching English and art, as she is not well and dealing with a chemical imbalance. Pray for recovery.

L & C expressed their gratitude for our friendship and support over the years, and send their love. Prayer is a significant encouragement to them.



Food for the First and Supplies for the Second



We continue to support our local community through donations to the Dubuque Food Pantry and the Domestic Violence Shelter. Donations are very needed at this time. You can see the list of the most up-to-date needs on the last page of the newsletter. The deacons are able to come to your home and pick up any donations that you would like to contribute on September 30th, between 11:00am and 1:00pm. Please place your items in a bag, mark which ministry the bag goes to, place it on your porch, and the deacons will get it to the right place! An email reminder with which deacon(s) to contact for pick-up will be sent out closer to September 30th.

Thank you,
The Deacons

CROPWALK 2020

Now is the time we'd usually be gearing up for the annual CROP Walk but, **the Dubuque area CROP Walk is cancelled for this year.** Money is still being raised around the country through virtual walks. One way to honor the CROP Walk mission is to donate directly to the Dubuque Food Pantry through Food for the First. *We look forward to walking together again next year!*



In the Life of FPC

NEW FORMAT for "FPC MEALS"

As you know, the deacons here at FPC faithfully organize and seek out the opportunity to deliver meals to our church family as a way to encourage and support them during times of life when food truly feeds the soul, such as moving, post-surgery, new baby, or a death in the family.

As COVID-19 continues to be a concern for all of us, the deacons are transitioning to sending a card and gift card in place of delivering home-cooked meals. The deacons have found most people are more comfortable this way, and it protects the health of everyone involved.

How can you help? By donating money so the deacons can purchase gift cards as needed! We want to have the flexibility to purchase gift cards to suit each individual or family situation. You can donate to "FPC Meals" by making a check payable to the "Deacons at First

Presbyterian Church" and mail it to the church in care of the treasurer, Bob Monty.



Thank you for supporting our church family in the time of need.
The Deacons

To Keep in Your Prayers...

As they continue their studies, begin college anew, or venture into the work world, please keep these young adults in your prayers. Also remember staff members, teachers, and all of our other students during the new school year.

We ask God to be with them and their families:

Carlie Boelk	<i>Iowa State University</i>
Elias Brehm	<i>US Military Academy West Point</i>
Jonah Brehm	<i>Iowa State University</i>
Eva McCaw	<i>Calvin College</i>
Tim McCaw	<i>Trinity Christian College</i>
Lupe Morales	<i>US National Guard serving overseas</i>
Sam Morales	<i>Working at Hobby Lobby</i>



Pandemic or not - it's our 10th year of active conversation. Come Zoom with us.



For everyone's safety, in-person meetings are cancelled until further notice.
So why not try our Children of Abraham conversation ONLINE?
Thursdays at 7PM.



2020-2021 Children of Abraham

Children of Abraham creates an atmosphere of civic life that builds inter-religious solidarity, cooperation and friendship. We do this through careful listening and generous sharing of ideas and traditions. Normally, we're in person. But this year, we will Zoom. Watch and participate via Zoom or our live Facebook page. Your choice.

www.cofabraham.org

Questions? john.eby@loras.edu or agarfield@dbq.edu

Our general theme of the year: Worldview in Times of Crisis

September 17: Anxiety, Fear, and Faith

October 15: Crisis & the Common Good: Civic Virtue

November 12: How faith stumbles: When our religious traditions get it wrong

January 21: Sacred Texts and Prejudice

February 18: Reconciliation and Repair

March 18: Is a Budget a Moral Document?

April 8: Artistic Expressions of Healing and Joy

If you would like to listen/participate on Zoom, email one of us to get the Zoom link - John (john.eby@loras.edu) or Alan (agarfield@dbq.edu). Or, just view our Facebook page - <https://www.facebook.com/cofabraham>.

Jeannie Armstrong sent us a thank you note regarding the loss of Thomas (Zender), her step-father who passed away:

Church Family & Friends,

How can I say thank you for your thoughts and prayers. Knowing that you were keeping us in your prayers means a lot and helps get through tough times.

Thanks again, Jeannie



September 2020

Deacons for the Month: Mark & Deb Stant

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 10:00am Church Chat via Zoom	3	4	5
6 10:15am Worship: Rev. Stephanie Ells, preaching via live stream	7 LABOR DAY Pastor out of the office	8	9 10:00am Church Chat via Zoom 4:15pm CE via Zoom 7:45pm Distance Worship Com. via Zoom	10 7:00pm Muir Task Force	11	12
13 10:15am Worship: Rev. Stephanie Ells, preaching via live stream	14	15	16 10:00am Church Chat via Zoom	17	18	19 9:30am Session
20 10:15am Worship: Rev. Stephanie Ells, preaching via live stream	21 Pastor out of the office	22	23 10:00am Church Chat via Zoom	24	25	26
27 RALLY DAY 10:15am Worship: Rev. Stephanie Ells, preaching via live stream -Teacher commissioning - 3rd grade Bible presentation	28	29	30 10:00am Church Chat via Zoom 6:00pm Confirmation via Zoom			

Happy birthday! Happy birthday! Happy birthday!

Birthdays & Anniversaries: September

- 2 Samson Klinebriel
- 7 Elise Henry
- 8 John Eby
- 9 David & Chrissi McClain
- 14 Beth McCaw
- 16 Naomi Brehm
- 17 Ariana Herbst
- 19 Alex Jack
- 20 John & Tammy Wehrspann
- 23 Annalee Ward
Richard Biechler
- 24 Dave & Terri Gronau
- 28 Bill Spoerl



Your Church Family Needs You!

All areas of ministry at FPC could use your gifts. Please speak to the committee chair listed below to join.

- Buildings & Grounds* – Tom Boelk
- Christian Education* – Linda Longfield
- Congregational Life* – Terri Gronau
- Finance & Personnel* – John Dillman
- Memorial* – Sandy Spencer & Linda Longfield
- Mission & Stewardship* – Annalee Ward & Sandy Spencer
- Worship* – Kristen Eby & Bradley Longfield

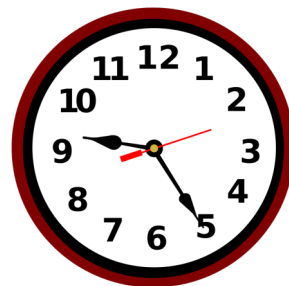


Electronic giving is available at FPC. There's information on how to set up online giving in the Coffee Hour room or you can contact church treasurer, Bob Monthey.

OFFICE HOURS

Due to the current COVID pandemic, **Pastor Stephanie's office hours at the church will be Mondays and Wednesdays from 9:00am-1:00pm.** Pastor Stephanie requests you set up an appointment time if you would like to see her, even during office hours. Masks will be required to protect one another's health and well-being.

Pastor Stephanie can be reached at (cell) 507-227-8537 or fpcdbq.pastor@gmail.com. In case of emergency, please call her cell number. If she does not answer, leave a voice message, and she will get back to you as soon as possible.



Administrative Assistant, Ginger Vander Broek, works from home. Her hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday 9:00-1:00pm. She can be reached through the church email: firstpresdbq@gmail.com

PREACHING SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER



- September 6 Rev. Stephanie Ells
- September 13 Rev. Stephanie Ells
- September 20 Rev. Stephanie Ells
- September 27 Rev. Stephanie Ells

Join Us for the Weekly Church Chat!

During the pandemic, each Wednesday at 10:00am, either Jamie Dillman or Pastor Stephanie will host an online church chat to help us stay connected. Everyone is welcome to join the meeting for weekly fellowship. Be looking for the email with the Zoom information for that week.



Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

Since we will not be gathering for face-to-face worship in September, and therefore cannot bring donations to the church, we will plan to collect items from your porch for the Dubuque Food Pantry (Food for the First) and the Victim Services Shelter (Supplies for the Second) on September 30. Watch your email for details.

You may also choose to give monetary gifts by sending a check to FPC marked for the Dubuque Food Pantry or Victim Services Shelter.

Items particularly needed include:

DBQ Food Pantry:

Any non-perishable food is in need, but the following are always in high demand - peanut butter, bar soap, and pasta mixes



Victim Services Shelter:

Toilet paper, paper towels, tissues, and disinfecting wipes and/or sprays



Thank you for supporting these ministries.